

# NATURAL HISTORY MISCELLANEA

Published by  
**The Chicago Academy of Sciences**  
Lincoln Park - 2001 N. Clark St., Chicago 14, Illinois

No. 33

November 22, 1948

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## Noteworthy Herpetological Records from Illinois

**Philip W. Smith\***

Recent collecting in Illinois, part of a program directed toward a survey of the herpetofauna of the state, has resulted in a number of noteworthy discoveries. Some of the more important are recorded herein with the intent that work done by others may be encouraged in the areas found to be of especial interest.

### ***Plethodon dorsalis* Baird.**

The occurrence of this species in southeastern Illinois has been indicated previously only by five specimens from Urbana, Illinois (Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist. 23297-23301). The accuracy of the locality data is somewhat questionable inasmuch as intensive exploration by others at the University of Illinois near Urbana has not revealed other specimens. Moreover, the immediate area surrounding Urbana does not appear to provide suitable *Plethodon* habitats. Dr. A. B. Grobman has advised me in correspondence that although he regarded the Urbana record as somewhat doubtful, he included it in his distributional study (1944) chiefly because of the proximity of reliable Indiana records.

In April of this year several series of typical specimens were taken five miles north of Herod in southern Saline County (INHS 2878-85), at Herod in Pope County (INHS 2897-2903), and at Dixon Springs, also in Pope County (INHS 2954-8). In addition, the collection of Dr. H. J. Van Cleave contains one from Olney in Richland County, and the University of Illinois Museum contains two bearing the data Danville, Illinois (Vermilion County). These additional records extend the known range throughout southeastern Illinois.

The southern Illinois specimens, of which approximately half were lead-backed forms, were easily separable from *P. cinereus* inasmuch as every individual of *P. dorsalis* was distinctly red-orange in the interhumeral region, on the undersides of the forelimbs, and on the sides of the jaws. Unfortunately, this color difference has not persisted in the preserved specimens.

\*Illinois Natural History Survey, Urbana.

*Desmognathus fuscus fuscus* (Rafinesque).

The University of Illinois Museum of Zoology contains two typical specimens of this species collected near Aldredge, Union County, Illinois, on April 20, 1935. Although the species has been expected in southeastern Illinois, and Hankinson (1915) has reported it from Charleston, Coles County in eastern central Illinois, the two from Union County are the only known specimens extant from Illinois and represent the westernmost record for the typical subspecies.

*Scaphiopus holbrookii* (Harlan).

Up to the present, the only record of this species in Illinois was that of Elder (1945), who reported seeing it at Horseshoe Lake in Alexander County. Six males taken by the writer May 15, 1948, approximately two miles north of Ware in Union County, are apparently the first Illinois specimens to reach a museum collection.

About 10:00 P.M., following eight hours of intermittent drizzle and heavy downpour on the above date, spadefoot toads were heard calling in a temporary pond which had obviously been under cultivation the previous year. The pond was filled with weeds and was nowhere more than three feet in depth. At least a dozen males were singing, in company with *Hyla versicolor*, *Acris crepitans*, *Pseudacris nigrata*, and *Rana pipiens*. Because specimens from other localities seemed more desirable than a large series from one locality, only six specimens were taken. I drove some 30 miles northward, stopping frequently to listen for their calls, but no others were heard. On the following day, however, at about 10:00 A. M. when the sky had cleared and the sun was shining, L. J. Stannard and I heard a single male calling in a roadside pool near Makanda in Jackson County, but it proved too wary to be captured.

*Microhyla carolinensis* (Holbrook).

Two adults (INHS 3273-4) taken three miles northeast of Valmeyer, one (INHS 3501) one-half mile south of Valmeyer, and three (INHS 3463-5) taken four miles south of Fults, all in Monroe County, constitute the first authentic records of the occurrence of this species in Illinois. All six were taken at the bases of limestone bluffs either in rotten logs or under other objects in surprisingly dry situations. This species has been expected in extreme southern Illinois, but none have been reported in spite of rather intensive collecting in that portion of the state.

***Heterodon nasicus nasicus* Baird and Girard.**

The presence of the western hog-nosed snake in the Havana sand area along the Illinois River has long been known. It has been reported from Pekin in Tazewell County (Garman, 1892), Havana in Mason County (Vestal, 1913), and Meredosia in Morgan County (Stanley, 1941). The last named author in the same paper reported one specimen from Amboy in Lee County which lies within a less extensive sand area some 80 miles northeast of Pekin.

Prompted by the Lee County record, the writer has recently visited two other sand areas in western Illinois and taken this species in three additional localities. Two (INHS 3153-4) were taken four miles north of Keithsburg in southern Mercer County, and one (INHS 3201) collected seven miles north of Oquawka in Henderson County. More recently a small specimen (INHS 3185) was found two miles south of Thomson in Carroll County. In both these areas the snakes were observed in typical sand habitats associated with *Terrapene ornata* and *Cnemidophorus sexlineatus*.

***Kinosternon flavescens flavescens* (Agassiz).**

Cahn (1931) first reported this species from localities along the Illinois River between Meredosia in Morgan County and Peoria in Peoria County. The same author later (1937) reported additional specimens but no new localities. During a recent visit to the Henderson County sand area, six turtles of this species were found DOR approximately two miles south of Oquawka. Only three small specimens (INHS 3220-2) were intact enough to be saved. Whether or not this turtle is generally distributed in the upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers or whether it is present only in isolated populations is unknown. It is of interest to note, however, that all the known Illinois localities lie within sand areas which are noted for their relict populations of western forms in many animal groups.

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